

Message Text

PAGE 01 TANANA 01050 151242Z

47

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-10 AID-05 NASA-01 OES-03 OPR-02

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O P 151025Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7351

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA PRIORITY

CINCUSNAVEUR PRIORITY

COMIDEASTFOR PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 1050

CINCLANT AND CINCUSNAVEUR FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGO, PINT, MA

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF RATSIRAKA AS HEAD OF STATE

REF: TANANARIVE'S 1049

SUMMARY: RATSIRAKA WILL POSE SOME PROBLEMS FOR U.S. - MALAGASY BILATERAL RELATIONS AS HE ALWAYS HAS, BUT BEHIND HIS RADICAL FASCADE ACCOMODATIONS SHOULD BE POSSIBLE ON ISSUES INVOLVING MUTUAL INTERESTS. RECOGNITION POSES NO PROBLEMS. TANANARIVE IS CALM BUT THAT COULD CHANGE. END SUMMARY.

1. COMMANDER DIDIER RATSIRAKA AS NEW HEAD OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT CAN BE EXPECTED TO KEEP MADAGASCAR IN CAMP OF NON-ALIGNED RADICALS AND TO RAIL AGAINST IMPERIALISTS FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION. CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TANANA 01050 151242Z

RATSIRAKA, HOWEVER, IS YOUNG, BRIGHT, ENERGETIC, OPPORTUNIST, WITH WHOM ONE CAN HOPE TO DEAL BEHIND FACADE OF RADICAL OR REVOLUTIONARY RHETORIC IF HE SEES REAL MALAGASY INTERESTS AT STAKE. EMBASSY SEES FUTURE U.S. - MALAGASY RELATIONS AS LIKELY

TO CONTINUE TO BE SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT AND TO REQUIRE TOUGH
NEGOTIATION ON MATTERS OF U.S. CONCERN SUCH AS NASA STATION,
BUT NO MORE DIFFICULT THAN THEY HAVE BEEN UNDER RATSIRAKA'S
DOMINATION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SINCE MAY 1972. AS EXAMPLE
OF POSSIBLE RATSIRAKA PRAGMATISM, EMBASSY HAS HAD INDICATIONS THAT
IT MAY BE POSSIBLE SOON FOR U.S. NAVAL SHIPS TO USE REPAIR
FACILITIES AT DIEGO SUAREZ DESPITE BAN ON NAVAL SHIP VISITS.
(DETAILS IN SEPTTEL.)

2. RECOGNITION OF RATSIRAKA AS NEW HEAD OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT
DOES NOT APPEAR TO POSE ANY PROBLEMS. TURNOVER OF FULL POWERS
TO RATSIRAKA BY RULING MILITARY DIRECTORY WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH
MALAGASY LAW. PAPAL NUNCIO (DEAN OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS) AND
BRITISH AMBASSADOR (VICE DEAN) CONCUR. RECOMMEND CONGRATULATORY
MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT FORD BE SENT SOONEST. I PLAN TO SEND
PERSONAL LETTER OF CONGRATULATIONS JUNE 16, UNLESS DEPARTMENT
OBJECTS.

3. I HAVE MET RATSIRAKA ON TWO OCCASIONS AND FORSEE NO PROBLEM
IN ACCESS TO HIM AS CHARGE WHEN NECESSARY EXCEPT FOR FACT THAT
HE WILL HAVE FULL PLATE OF PROBLEMS FACING HIM.

4. SUNDAY OBVIOUSLY CHOSEN AS DAY FOR ANNOUNCEMENT TO MINIMIZE
SECURITY PROBLEMS SINCE DOWNTOWN TANANARIVE IS LARGELY DESERTED
AS USUAL, AND CITY IS PREDICTABLY CALM. TURNOVER CEREMONY
AT FORMER FRENCH EMBASSY PROTECTED BY EXTREMELY LARGE SECURITY
FORCE. BEFORE ANNOUNCEMENT OF RATSIRAKA TAKEOVER, STUDENT
STRIKE PROTESTING TRIAL VERDICT HAD BEEN RUMORED FOR JUNE 16.
POSSIBILITY OF CIVIL DISORDER DOES EXIST AND RATSIRAKA IS NOT
UNIVERSALLY ADMIRER, ESPECIALLY BY MERINA IN CAPITAL.

5. TANANARIVE A-50 OF JUNE 12 POUCHED TO ALL ADDRESSEES
PROVIDES FURTHER POLITICAL BACKGROUND.
ELFERS

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

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DIA INFO NAIROBI
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PRETORIA
CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

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